

It seemed like a pretty good deal to those who write the laws, and so, therefore, in the Federal Thrift Savings Plan, if you're a Member of the United States Congress and you so choose, you can set aside some of your own money and put it in a personal savings account. My message to the United States Congress is, if that idea is good enough for you, it is good enough for workers all across America.

We have an obligation to confront problems head on here in Washington. Our children's retirement security is too important for politics as usual. If you're getting a check, you having nothing to worry about. If you're retired, the system is just fine for you. But if you're a grandma or granddad, you better be talking to the Members of the United States Congress about what they intend to do to fix the system for your grandchildren.

We have a shared responsibility here in Washington to work together. We've got a great opportunity to permanently reform Social Security so that seniors will be kept out of poverty when they retire. We've got a chance to spread ownership. I talked about homeownership earlier; I talked about owning your own business. Another way to encourage ownership in America is to let more people manage their own money when it comes time for their retirement.

I don't think investments ought to be confined just to the investment class. I understand the more that people own something, the more they watch their assets grow, the better off America is. I want people from all walks of life working hard and developing assets and savings that they can pass on to their children, if that's what they choose to do. The more ownership we have in America, the better off America is.

It is time we take on this debate with courage and honesty, and I believe we'll succeed. And I ask you to contact the Members of the House of Representatives and Senate—Members of the Senate from your States and encourage them to work in good faith to solve this problem. And when we do, Republicans and Democrats will be able to stand together and take credit for doing what is right for our children and our grandchildren.

Thanks for letting me come by today, and may God bless you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:14 a.m. at the Marriott Wardman Park Hotel. In his remarks, he referred to President Vladimir Putin of Russia.

Remarks Honoring Spring and Fall NCAA Championship Teams

May 13, 2005

The President. Please be seated. Thank you. Welcome to the White House, the people's house. We're glad you're here. Today we honor four outstanding NCAA championship teams. The—it's a great—I love this day in the White House. It's a chance to honor people who have worked hard, made right decisions with their lives, and served something greater than themselves, their team. So, really glad you're here. I hope you're excited—as excited about being here as I am as excited about receiving you.

I first want to say thanks to Congresswoman Anna Eshoo for coming. I think—I suspect you're here to support the mighty Stanford women's volleyball team.

Ed Royce from California is here. He's a Cal State grad—Cal State, Fullerton, grad. And you like baseball?

Audience member. [Inaudible]

The President. Yes. All right, good. I'm glad Marie is with you. Welcome, Marie.

I want to thank Mike Sodrel for coming. Mike, it's good to see you, sir, and your wife, Keta. Mike is from Indiana. He's here because of the men's soccer team, right, Michael?

Audience member. Yes, sir.

The President. Good. Glad you all are here.

Milton Gordon is the president of Cal State, Fullerton—and his wife, Dr. Margaret Faulwell Gordon. I'm glad you all are here.

Mike Freitag, the head coach, is with us from mighty Indiana University, his wife, Renee, and his daughter Hanna. Welcome.

I appreciate Randy Waldrum, who's the head coach of the University of Notre Dame women's soccer team. Randy, it's good to see you, sir. I know your son is here as well.

I appreciate George Horton, who is the baseball coach at Cal State, Fullerton.

I want to thank John Dunning, who's the head coach of the women's volleyball team

at Stanford. I welcome his wife, Julie, and his daughter Lauren.

But most of all, I want to thank the players who are here. Good going, and congratulations.

The first team we honor is the Indiana men's soccer team. They are the champs for the second year in a row. I kind of like that idea, back-to-back trips to the White House. [Laughter] Glad you all are back. And the championship game was pretty darn exciting, wasn't it? The game was tied after regulations, 20 minutes of overtime. It came down to penalty kicks. Congratulations.

Coach, I want to congratulate you as well. Pretty good job for a rookie. [Laughter] One of the interesting things the coach made the decision on—the back-to-back championship, he said, “If we win, the team can go ahead and shave his head.” That's something we don't want to get started here in the White House. [Laughter]

Interestingly enough, the team made an incredibly generous gesture. They purchased a water buffalo in Laura and my honor and gave it to a family overseas so that the family could better make a living. And I want to thank you for that great act of generosity. Thank you all. It really does mean a lot.

I want to welcome the Notre Dame women's soccer team. I think it helps a lot you've got coaches from Texas. [Laughter] What do you think? Yes. Anyway, what a great victory the women's team had as well. You beat UCLA on penalty kicks. I loved your slogan, like, GOAT, “Greatest of All Time,” in reference to your team. I appreciate you setting high standards and working hard. And congratulations on a job well done.

And the mighty Titans from Cal State, Fullerton, had a motto of their own. The motto was, “Think How Good It's Gonna Feel.” I didn't feel so good for the Longhorns. [Laughter] But I do want to congratulate you. I love baseball. I was telling the players that's my favorite sport of all. It's a hard game to play, and it's definitely a team game, and it's really hard to win the national championship in all sports. And this is a team that was, like, under .500 in your first 30 games or so, and then you went 32 out of 38 for the final—in the final stretch of the season.

I really appreciate what Coach Horton said. He said about the championship victory, “I still have chills. It's not from the cold water that was dropped on my head.” [Laughter] You don't have much hair to protect your head anyway, but—[laughter]—that was kind of a cheap shot, wasn't it? [Laughter] The guy is a pretty good coach, though. Good luck.

I also want to welcome the Stanford women's volleyball team. I was telling the women from Stanford that I was just with Condoleezza Rice, former provost of Stanford University. I said, “Come by and welcome the home girls. Come by and tell them, good going for the second visit in 4 years to the White House.” She said she had to meet with a leader from another nation. So she sends her best to you.

I want to welcome you all back here. I appreciate the fact that you won 15 games in a row and you weren't supposed to win the championship. You know, sometimes they count you out of a race—[laughter]—a little too soon, right? [Laughter] But we're glad you're back.

And I want to thank all the teams. I particularly want to thank all the teams not only for being such good role models as you play your games, but also off the fields of play. And it's really important that you recognize that as champs, there's some person watching you and some person trying to learn from you and some person that if you—whose life you can affect more than you know.

And so, when I'm told that the Indiana men's soccer team volunteer for youth soccer programs and go to schools encouraging people to make good choices in life, it heartens my soul. And I want to thank you all for doing that. You just don't know what it means to be a champion and have an eighth-grade kid or a seventh-grade kid hear from a star, “Make a good choice. Love a neighbor like you'd like to be loved yourself.”

And the Notre Dame women's soccer players volunteer at an after-school program. That's great. You know, it can't be a greater gift than to teach a child to read or to encourage a child to read. It's a lasting legacy. Frankly, it's more important than a sports trophy. And I want to thank you for doing that.

I appreciate the Stanford women's volleyball players who read to children at local elementary schools and then help young girls learn the great value of being on a team sport through a volleyball clinic. Keep doing it, not only as college students but after you get out. It's one great way to serve our Nation.

And I appreciate the fact that the Cal State, Fullerton, players took time out of the World Series last year to go to the hospital and say something to somebody who hurts.

What I'm telling you is, you can be a champ on the field and you can be a champ off the field. You'll have a full life when you're able to say to yourself, "I've really helped somebody in need."

Congratulations for setting such a great example. Welcome to the White House. Maybe you'll be back next year. I'll be here to greet you if you come back. God bless.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:02 p.m. in the East Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Marie Royce, wife of Representative Edward R. Royce; and professional soccer player Ben Waldrum, son of University of Notre Dame women's soccer head coach Randy Waldrum.

Proclamation 7901—Peace Officers Memorial Day and Police Week, 2005

May 13, 2005

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

Across our Nation, the courageous men and women who protect our communities wear the uniform and badge with pride as they safeguard our families, homes, and communities. On Peace Officers Memorial Day and Police Week, we honor the memory of those heroes who have fallen in the line of duty and recognize all those who put themselves at risk in the fight against crime, violence, and terrorism.

More than 800,000 men and women serve as officers of the law in the United States. They serve in varying capacities, including as U.S. Marshals, county sheriffs, deputies,

State patrolmen, municipal police, and Federal agents. They share the fundamental qualities of discipline, integrity, and courage. Since our Nation's founding, peace officers have upheld the rule of law and defended the innocent, and we are grateful to them and their families for all they do to strengthen our communities.

On Peace Officers Memorial Day, we pause to remember those who have made the ultimate sacrifice. These brave men and women accepted the responsibilities of a noble calling and were willing to face danger for our safety. By having their names engraved into the National Law Enforcement Officers Memorial in Washington, D.C., and praying for their families, we honor the memory of these fallen heroes and show the respect of a grateful Nation.

During Police Week and throughout the year, I urge all Americans to support law enforcement officers in the fight against crime. Every citizen can assist his or her local police force to help make our communities safer. Successful Citizen Corps programs like Neighborhood Watch and Volunteers in Police Service are making a difference in the lives of others, one heart and one neighborhood at a time. Information about these and other volunteer programs can be obtained by visiting the Citizen Corps website at citizencorps.gov. By working together, we can continue to build a safer America.

By a joint resolution approved October 1, 1962, as amended, (76 Stat. 676), the Congress has authorized and requested the President to designate May 15 of each year as "Peace Officers Memorial Day" and the week in which it falls as "Police Week," and by Public Law 103-322, as amended, (36 U.S.C. 136), has directed that the flag be flown at half-staff on Peace Officers Memorial Day.

Now, Therefore, I, George W. Bush, President of the United States of America, do hereby proclaim May 15, 2005, as Peace Officers Memorial Day and May 15 through May 21, 2005, as Police Week. I call on all Americans to observe these events with appropriate ceremonies and activities. I also call on Governors of the United States and the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, as well as